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tion. In our next number we hope to give an account of the contents of the articles that have appeared in the last three volumes of that journal.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DIALECTIC METHOD OF HEGEL AND THE SYNTHETIC METHOD OF KANT AND FICHTE.

By A. E. KROEGER.

There are two parties holding opposite judgments regarding the relation of Hegel's dialectic method to the method of Kant and Fichte's system of transcendentalism. It seems that the question should be considered settled by Hegel's own statement in his *History of Philosophy*, where he substantially avers that the method of Fichte's *Science of Knowledge* is the same as his own, just as he there modestly concedes to Schelling the contents of his system; he claiming for himself only the merit of being the first who fused the true absolute system with the true absolute method. But this declaration of Hegel's has not been considered satisfactory; and all recent historians of Philosophy are more or less at loggerheads with each other on this point. To settle the question it will, therefore, be necessary to examine the two methods; that is, to see how Fichte, following Kant, proceeds in his philosophizing, and how Hegel proceeds in his. For this purpose it is not necessary to consider beforehand whether or not philosophy can be true only in so far as its method is true, philosophy being in fact nothing but the absolute method; though it may not be out of place to state historically that both Fichte and Hegel agree upon this point, both answering in the affirmative.

Fichte, then, in all his various representations of the *Science of Knowledge*, and indeed in all his scientific writings, proceeds as follows:

He states, and calls upon his readers to verify it in contemplation, that in every act of thinking there are two ingredients, whereof neither one can be deduced from the other, but both of which claim equal validity; that hence every act

of thinking is a synthetical act embracing two opposites, and that it is the sole province of philosophy to discover and explain how this synthesis is possible; that is, how it happens that we must in every act of our mind hold two opposites, in part related and in part opposed to each other.

The problem of philosophy, therefore, is altogether, as Kant very correctly had stated before, to discover the absolute ground of all synthetical judgments.

Now this absolute final ground Fichte—as before him Kant—states to be this: the Ego, or an absolutely active self-conscious activity, could not be an Ego, could not be self-conscious of itself as such absolute activity, if there did not appear in every act of its self-consciousness also a non-Ego; the reason being this: an absolute activity could never become conscious of itself if it were not checked in its activity, and thus, as it were, thrown back into itself with what would now be a consciousness of both itself and a check. Now, having once named itself as absolute activity by the name Ego, it could certainly not look upon the check of that activity as also Ego, but would rather have to look upon and name it its opposite, non-Ego.

Coming thus to consciousness, it would, therefore, find as its primitive nature and act, as indeed that which constituted its nature and act, a synthesis of non-Ego and Ego; and this primitive and original synthesis could not otherwise than manifest itself in every other one of its acts.

What must be noticed here is the statement, that neither can the Ego be explained from the non-Ego, nor the non-Ego from the Ego; that neither is analytically contained in the other as part of it, but that both are in fact complete and utter opposites; that is, must be so conceived, and cannot be conceived otherwise. Their union, the union of the thesis of a pure Ego and the antithesis of a checking non-Ego, results in the synthesis of a self-conscious Ego; that is, of a rational absolute mind in a material limited body, or, more accurately expressed, in a system of such rational individuals, each one of which, as such a synthetic unity, is that very trinity which theologians by a fallacy of reasoning apply to the conception of the totality of the Egohood and call it the triune God.

Hegel's proceeding differs from the above synthetic in this,

that he does not concede, or at least does not seem to concede, this partly absolute oppositedness of the two elements of the synthesis; and looks only to their relatedness. Thus he does not say, that immediately together with the conception of Being another entirely opposite, though also related, conception of non-Being is joined when we think Becoming; but he says, or seems to say, that the conception of Being involves as one of its parts the conception of non-Being; that the latter conception can, therefore, be analytically gathered from the first; though, if he does so mean, it is not possible to see how Being could change into Becoming, since the element of non-Being would not alter the character of Being at all, and Being, after non-Being had been pointed out as one of its characteristics, would still remain simply Being and nothing else. If Hegel does not so mean, he has chosen a most unfortunate way of expressing himself; but his own averment in his *History of Philosophy* would, as we have said, seem to suggest that he did not so mean. If he did so mean, however, then there is a difference and a most vital one between Fichte's synthetic and Hegel's dialectic method, a difference which will now be apparent to every one.

It may be mentioned in passing, as perhaps of interest to those who have read Trendelenburg's criticism of Hegel's method in this Journal, that Trendelenburg's objection to the dialectic method—that it surreptitiously takes and applies the contemplation of *local* motion from empirical consciousness—is simply absurd. *Local* motion occurs between two bodies in space, and the conception of local motion can be applied, of course, to nothing else. Trendelenburg's criticism, therefore, implies that he considers the conceptions of Being and non-Being—which are alluded to by Hegel as moving in a dialectic way—as things in space; and one is tempted to ask him, whether he considers them of globular or triangular form, &c. The absurdity is clear. It is not from local motion that the general conception of motion issues; indeed, the very reverse is the case, the activity of thinking, being the primitive source of the conception of movement. And even in common language we thus speak of thoughts as moving, &c. Hegel is thus perfectly justified, and introduces no surreptitiously obtained conception when he speaks of a dialectic

movement as the equivalent for the sequence of certain conceptions in thinking. It is a strange evidence of the general superficiality of "thinkers" that such things should require notice; stranger still that this evident absurdity should have been considered by Trendelenburg a wonderful discovery, overthrowing the gigantic fabric of Hegel's Logic! But these continual misapprehensions and disputes make it all the more clear, how necessary for the exactness of a pure science is a system of signs to replace words, and leave it a matter of deep regret that Leibnitz, who had such a system projected, did not carry out his design, he being of all the great minds of science beyond doubt most peculiarly gifted to have given it best shape. The real objection, as already suggested, to the word "movement" in that famous paragraph of the Logic is this, that Hegel speaks as if the conceptions of Being and non-Being moved. Now, mere conceptions as they are, they of course cannot, in proper use of language, be said to move; but the thinking of them is, in all language, quite properly called a moving from one to the other. The question, however, whether Hegel meant this or not, does not involve any unauthorized making use of the conception of *local* motion, but simply the point, above discussed, whether Hegel meant his dialectic method to be the same as Fichte's synthetical method or not.

BOOK NOTICES.

The Dialogues of Plato, translated into English, with Analyses and Introductions, by B. Jowett, M.A., Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford. 4 vols. New York: Charles Scribner & Co. 1871.

This reprint, which costs the student just one half the price of the original English edition, should be in every library, public or private. Moreover, every one should read it; many people own a copy of Plato, but how few read and understand him! Professor Jowett has spared no pains to make a free translation — one that seems vernacular English. It has immense advantages in this respect over any former translation. We commend the work to all interested in Philosophy. Let them read Emerson's essay on Plato in the "Representative Men," then Hegel's lecture on Plato in Vol. IV. of this Journal, and then read Jowett's translation, and study his Introductions.

Die Rechtsstellung des Weibes innerhalb der Ehe. Ein Vortrag von Max Eberhardt. Chicago: Meminger & Shick. 1871.